

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 were pending in this application prior to this amendment. Upon entry of this amendment, which is respectfully requested, claims 1 and 5 are amended. Thus, upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-5 remain pending.

No new matter is introduced by this amendment. Support for the amendments herein can be found throughout the application as originally filed.

35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2005/0043089 A1 to Nguyen et al. (hereinafter "Nguyen") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2005/0192089 to Blatter et al. (hereinafter "Blatter").

Currently amended claims 1 and 5 each provide a card game system that includes game apparatuses that are configured as either master or terminal apparatuses. The game apparatuses are further configured to receive game information from a player using a card. Progression of game play, *e.g.*, timing of different player turns, occurs within a "specific time" for a game ongoing, and is controlled by various devices of the master apparatus. In particular, the master apparatus includes a master reception device, a start determination device, a permission device, an elapse determination device, a rejection device, and a "device configured to execute game progress processes."

With respect to the "specific time," claims 1 and 5 recite, *inter alia*:

- "a start determination device configured to determine whether to start **a specific time during the game ongoing;**"
- "a permission device configured to make the master reception device reject to receive the game information at the master reception device until the start determination device determines to start **the specific time during the game ongoing;**" and
- "a device configured to execute game progress processes using the game information received **during the specific time during the game ongoing** from

the game apparatuses including the master apparatus, so that the game information affects a result of the game ongoing.” (Emphasis added). Thus, the player is allowed to use the card after the “specific time” starts (yet within the specific time period), in a game ongoing, in order to make the game information obtained from the card affect the game result.

Nguyen discloses a tournament game system that uses a network of remote gaming units deployed at casinos, hotels, restaurants, etc. See Nguyen ¶ [0058]. The tournament game system includes a tournament server, which initiates tournament play, e.g., tournament time. The tournament server initiates tournament play by starting a timer at an appropriate time and subsequently monitors a clock. See Nguyen ¶ [0088]. Enable and disable signals can be sent at the start of the tournament play or, alternatively, these signals can be sent to gaming units after the start of the tournament play, e.g., a player joins a tournament late. Nguyen ¶ [0089]-[0091]. However, “tournament time” merely defines temporal periods in which players can play in a tournament game and does not teach or suggest “the specific time” recited by claim 1. Moreover, Nguyen does not teach or suggest any “master reception device configured to receive the game information transmitted from each of the plurality of game apparatus,” subject to a permission device configured to control reception of game information, and according to the specific time during the game ongoing, as recited by claims 1 and 5.

Blatter discloses a video game device that has a card reader that can be used to establish game play credits. See Abstract. The card reader can also be used as an input device, which, when provided a special control card, places the video game device into a special mode, e.g., “Closest To The Pin” for a golf game. See ¶ [0045]. However, once the control card has been swiped and the special mode is selected, “the game then re-boots into ‘Closest to the Pin’ mode.” See ¶ [0018]. That is, the special mode refers to a new game and does not refer to any “game ongoing.” In addition, Blatter fails to disclose or suggest any “specific time” used to collect the game information from an aggregation of game apparatuses, as provided by claims 1 and 5. Specifically, Blatter fails to disclose or suggest any “master reception device configured

to receive the game information transmitted from each of the plurality of game apparatus" subject to a permission device configured to control reception of game information, and according to the specific time during the game ongoing, as recited by claims 1 and 5.

Thus, a combination the control card, including control codes, of Blatter with the tournament game system of Nguyen, results in restarting the "tournament time" or starting an altogether new tournament in a special mode. Neither restarting the tournament, nor starting a new tournament in the special mode, constitutes a system in which "the game information [received during the specific time] affects a result of the game ongoing", as recited by claim 1 and 5.

By rejecting game information before and after the specific time "during the game ongoing" and executing game progress processes because on game information received during the specific time "during the game ongoing," the claimed invention advantageously promotes a feeling amongst players that each player's use of a card is simultaneous, even though there may, in fact, be a considerable variance in timing between each player's use of a card.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Nguyen in view of Blatter.

The Office Action also rejects claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Nguyen in view of Blatter and U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0020745 A1 to Yap et al. (hereinafter "Yap"). Claim 4 depends from claim 1.

As discussed above in the context of claim 1, Nguyen and Blatter, either individually or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the "specific time" and the "master reception device configured to receive the game information transmitted from each of the plurality of game apparatus" subject to a permission device configured to control reception of game information according to the specific time during the game ongoing, as recited by claim 1.

Yap, which discloses the use of multiple smartcards, fails to cure either of these defects.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Nguyen in view of Blatter and Yap.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. If a telephone conversation with Applicants' representatives would be helpful to resolve any further issues and/or expedite further prosecution of the application, Applicants invite the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Fee Authorization

Applicants believe that no fees are due for the submission of this Amendment and Response other than the fee for a one-month extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a)(1). If additional fees are required, the Director is authorized to charge any fees associated with this submission to our Deposit Account No. 04-1105 under Reference 86295(308246). Any overpayment should be credited to the Deposit Account.

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Respectfully submitted,

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